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October 12, 1962

MEMORANDUM TO: G - Mr. Johnson
FROM: ARA - Edwin M. Martin
SUBJECT: Track Two

The following is the pertinent portion of Mr. Rostov's paper:

"I believe we should consider the possibility of a Two-Track covert operation.

"Track One would consist of a heightened effort to move along the present Mongoose lines. The minimum objective here would be harassment: the maximum objective would be the triggering of a situation where there might be conflict at the top of the Cuban regime leading, hopefully, to its change or overthrow by some group within Cuba commanding arms.

"Track Two would consist of an effort to engage Cubans more deeply, both within Cuba and abroad, in efforts of their own liberation. This requires an operation with the following characteristics:

"a. Authentic Cuban leadership with a considerable range of freedom to implement ideas and to assume risk.

"b. Minimal U.S. direct participation: ideally, one truly wise U.S. adviser — available, but laying back; equipped to provide finance, but not monitoring every move; capable of earning their respect rather than commanding it by his control over money or equipment.

"c. Basing outside the United States.

"d. A link-up with the scattered and sporadic groups and operations now going forward of their own momentum in Cuba.

"e. A plan of operation which aims at the overthrow of Castro primarily from within rather than by invasion from without.

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TRACK TWO.

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A program of "giving the Cubans their heads" in an effort to effect the downfall of the Castro regime from within involves embarking upon uncharted waters as far as the U.S. is concerned. Grandiose U.S. plans based upon a substantially unified exile community would be unrealistic. Nearly all Cuban exile leaders, of whatever political persuasion, are convinced that only overt U.S. military action can remove the Castro regime. While we could probably force a semblance of unity based upon the "downfall from within" thesis, despite the sharp political rivalry among the exile leaders, our purposes would not be served. While "accepting" our thesis, most of the waking hours of these exiles would be devoted to devising ways of involving the U.S. militarily, rather than building the internal base of opposition we seek. We could thereby lose initiative and control over the situation and find ourselves in an untenable position from the international, and, perhaps, domestic, standpoint.

If the above judgment is accepted, two alternatives are available. We could cooperate with Anti-Castro-Batista exile groups which we have reason to believe have following inside Cuba, or we could, on an experimental basis work with one such group. By cooperating with all such groups we run the serious risk of accentuating rivalries among the exile leaders which would be inevitably reflected within Cuba. Rather than achieving a broad base of political opposition within Cuba, we may only be instrumental in fomenting splinter groups. In attempting to administer such a program, the U.S. would probably find itself in the midst of the crossfire of exile politics, very likely satisfying no one inside or outside Cuba.

Working with one group, on an experimental basis, would provide us with experience which could guide our future thinking and at the same time probably prevent problems of unmanageable proportions. Selection of the right group is of paramount importance. Even then, if we saw no progress in Cuba, we could not be certain that the thesis was impractical or the selection of the group erroneous.

Of all the exile groups the only one which has publicly adopted the thesis of "downfall from within" is that known as JURE, formed in September 1962 by Manolo Ray and based in Puerto Rico. (Since Ray has some friends within the U.S. Government

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and is presently employed by the Puerto Rican Government, it is reasonable to suppose that some of the recent official interest in the "downfall from within" thesis has been generated by him). Ray was former Minister of Public Works under Castro, broke with Castro and formed an important underground movement which has since been badly smashed by Castro. Ray is a nationalist and left of center. The political program of JURE is one with which the U.S. can live.

The other feasible possibility is the CRC with which we have had a long standing relationship. Apart from Dr. Miro and some of the organizations that form an integral part of the Council, the CRC is not a very effective organization for what we have in mind. Its background is associated with the Bay of Pigs and its outlook is essentially one of military action.

Advantages of working with JURE would appear to be:

1. A new organization which, as such, has no past relationship with the U.S.
2. Commitment to the "downfall from within" thesis.
3. Base outside the U.S.
4. Political ideology which may be attuned to the desires of the Cuban people.
5. Ray is experienced in underground activities and an independent thinker.

Disadvantages of working with JURE are:

1. Little, if any, assets known within Cuba today.
2. Opposed by most of the established exile groups, particularly Dr. Miro.
3. Ray is a complex personality, sometimes difficult to handle.

On balance it is worth trying. Although we would try to maintain security, Dr. Miro may discover our assistance to Ray

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and resign. The CRC is useful to us, but its disappearance would be bearable.

If we embark upon these uncharted waters, and it is recommended that we do so, we must be prepared for increased noise level and press inquiry. We must be prepared for a comparatively high rate of loss, failures and cries of anguish from JURE for assistance we may not be able to give it. It is essential that we recognize this and not be permitted to be stamped into regrettable public postures or actions. A further important consideration is that Track Two operations may compromise Track One operations. Coordination would be essential.

Another conflict arises from the President's desire that a Cuban Brigade be formed. While this would not necessarily be a serious conflict with the program envisaged, for there are probably enough exiles for both programs, it should be recognized that a number of young men qualified for infiltration activities will probably join the Brigade. (u)(1)(4)
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If we attempt our program on a large scale, or with more than one group, the immediately above-mentioned problems would multiply.

The program we would visualize is one of providing the selected exile group with funds, arms, sabotage equipment, transport and communications equipment for infiltration operations in order to build a political base of opposition inside Cuba. We would provide the best technical advice we could. Our role would essentially be that of advisors and purveyors of material goods -- it would be the exile group's show. We would insist that hit and run raids or similar harassing activities that clearly originate from outside Cuba and do not reflect internal activity not be engaged in..

In sum, we should be cautious about grandiose schemes, a "major" U.S. effort, and deep commitments to the exiles. We should experiment in this new venture on a small scale with patience and tolerance for high noise levels and mistakes.

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY

September 19, 1962

MEMORANDUM TO: G - U. Alexis Johnson
FROM: ARA - Edwin M. Martin
SUBJECT: Policy Recommendation with respect to Cuba

The coming 18 months are likely to prove the most grueling that the Cuban people will have to endure. The nadir of the Cuban economy will probably be reached during this period. The western equipped sectors of the economy will continue to deteriorate for lack of foreign exchange to purchase spare parts and equipment, while the Soviet capital equipment will not have begun to produce. Managerial and administrative personnel trained in the complexity of running a state controlled economy will continue to be lacking. At the same time, the Castro regime, under heavy Soviet pressure and with Soviet assistance, will probably undertake harsh measures to keep the economy from floundering. Experience in other Communist countries would indicate that there is approaching one of the most dangerous periods (from the Communist standpoint) in the process of transition toward a complete "socialist" state. This process will probably be accompanied by severe regimentation and perhaps terror.

We can, therefore, reasonably look for the highest point of Cuban popular dissatisfaction toward the Castro regime during this period. Three factors favor the Castro regime's ability to survive this critical period: (1) the charisma of Fidel Castro; (2) the State security apparatus supported by Soviet involvement; (3), the absence of organized resistance with a political base in Cuba confident of United States support during the Castro regime and afterward. The presence of the third of these factors together with the absence of the first, could place in doubt the survival of Cuban-Marxist-Leninist government.

While we have been moderately successful in infiltrating some Cubans, we have been singularly unsuccessful in creating a political base of internal opposition. Our failure stems primarily from our practice of "controlling" or "managing" the Cuban exiles as individuals. We have not taken advantage of them as groups — as political entities with assets in Cuba. In effect, we have sought to make this a "U.S. show" using Cubans. To this extent, we are probably repeating past mistakes.

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To create an opposition with a political base in Cuba, we should adopt a policy of giving assistance to Cuban groups without establishing rigid rules of planning or controlling. Our criteria for assistance (which should consist primarily of sabotage materiel, arms, radio equipment and transport) should be:

1. that the groups have assets in Cuba (cf., NIE August 1, 1962)
2. that the groups will undertake only those actions against the Castro regime which can be reasonably believed to have been accomplished from inside Cuba.
3. that the groups agree to maintain a high degree of security.

This program would be supplemental to rather than a replacement for existing programs using refugees. The United States role would be primarily that of purveyor of materiel, financial assistance and technical know-how. Under this policy, we should be prepared for a number of failures and probably a fair amount of publicity. On the other hand, the student or other groups, will probably continue to embarrass the U.S. with their improvised schemes for attracting attention to the Cuban cause. We would hope, although we cannot be certain, that by providing exile groups that have assets inside Cuba the wherewithal for an internal struggle against Cuba, political opposition would be created and nurtured and that a minimum of external attacks on Cuba by refugees would recur.

Recommendation

That you advance the foregoing view for policy approval at the next Special Group meeting. (We would prefer to by-pass the Lansdale group this time for the sake of speed).

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

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